

# Arlington

## MASTER COMPOSTERS

Forty-First Edition

November 2003

The **MASTER COMPOSTER** Program of Arlington is in partnership with Texas to dramatically decrease yard and household waste going to landfills by inspiring and educating our citizens to reduce, recycle, and reuse.

## Trinity Trash Bash

**E**ight Master Composters endured warm temperatures, mosquitoes, poison ivy, tall weeds and barbed-wire fencing in an effort to rid the Lynn Creek Linear Park of trash and litter. A big thanks goes out to Trenton Schoneweis and his girlfriend, Amy Winbigler; John & Frances Presson; Connie Nolen; Pete & Wanda Martin; and Betsey Hudon who attended the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Trinity Trash Bash Clean-up Day on Saturday, September 20 at Lynn

Creek Park.

Over 50 bags of litter and trash totaling 1,720 lbs. were collected from the Lynn Creek linear park. Master Composters led groups of volunteers from several organizations to clean up the area which was one of four sites targeted by the City of



*The Pressons led their group out early and were the last to return from their cleanup adventure.*

Arlington Parks Department for litter cleanup.



*Trenton and Amy relax after a morning of leading a group of Girl Scouts.*



*Pete Martin gives a few final instructions to his volunteer group before getting started.*

Photos by Michael Hudon

## November meeting cancelled

There will be no general membership meeting in November. Lorrie Anderle has another work-related commitment and will be unable to attend, so the next general membership meeting will be in January, 2004.

## CALENDAR of Events

### November 1

2-hour class and work day  
at Veteran's Park

### November 8

2-hour composting class  
and work day at River Legacy  
Living Science Center

### November 15

Computer Roundup at UTA

### December 6

Two-hour class and work day  
at Veteran's Park

### December 6

Annual Christmas Luncheon

### October 11

2-hour composting class  
and work day at River Legacy  
Living Science Center

# Compost Chat and Chew

by Jane Borland

Warm greetings to my Master Composter Friends.

As I sit at my computer today, I breathe a sign of relief that Autumn has finally arrived, bringing with it cooler temperatures and the rustling sound of leaves falling. Fall is one of my very favorite times of year, though I must say that our display of fall colors here in Arlington often leaves much to be desired. Judging from the temperatures the last couple of weeks, we are not likely to have much more than brown dead leaves this year that simply dry up and fall off. If only we could have packed up and gone to New England the 1<sup>st</sup> of October, but since I couldn't this year, I pulled out this photo from a previous trip and placed it in a place of prominence on my refrigerator. Although the foliage on the trees in Vermont and



New Hampshire was spectacular, I found myself spending most of my time looking at the patchwork blanket of colors on the forest floor and at the fabulous combination of color and texture in the streams.

But fall is much more than a season of color. It is a season of preparation for the winter months ahead. Did your life seem to slow down this weekend, particularly when we changed the clocks and it got dark so early? Did you find yourself inhaling the cool breeze and wishing for a flannel shirt and a cup of hot tea while feeling the need to get the garden ready for winter? The animals in nature spend the fall gathering winter foods and nesting materials as their metabolism begins to slow down. Running at full speed burns much too much precious energy that may be needed in the middle of winter, so they slow their pace and begin putting on their warmer winter plumage. Don't we instinctively do the same?

For me, fall is also a time of reflection and warm memories. Traditionally, as we slow down, we find we have more time for family and friends and

spend more quality time visiting and sharing with others. Memories stretch from childhood games of raking leaves and jumping into them, to family dinners around the kitchen table, eating stew and cornbread and replaying the events of the day. This also brings to mind one of my all time most favorite activities, making leaf prints. Quite honestly, I still do this every fall and encourage you to do the same. No matter how old we are, the therapeutic effect is always priceless. So... go out and buy a new box of crayons (a thrill in itself) or dig around to find an old

box, and then do the unthinkable. Break the crayons apart into 2 or 3 pieces, removing the paper cover. Then, grab a stack of paper from the recycle bin (one side clean), a clip board or other firm backdrop, and

head out for your favorite grove of trees. Sweetgums, maples and oaks are among my favorites. Pick out a variety of leaves of different sizes and shapes. Then, find a quiet spot and begin your therapy. For those of you who have not made leaf prints in a long time (or God forbid, those of you who have never made one), place a leaf vein side up on a firm surface and then place a piece of paper on top of the leaf. Choose a piece of crayon to your liking and then using the flat side of the crayon, begin coloring over the area where the leaf lies. Press down fairly hard to get a good imprint of the leaf veins and edges. Repeat until your heart is content. You may even want to take some nicer paper with you to make your own greeting cards.

Hey, I just had a fun idea. Why not bring your leaf print creations to our annual Christmas luncheon for show and tell? This could be a lot of fun. In the meantime, enjoy this wonderful season and take time to reflect on the beauty that surrounds us.

Looking forward to seeing your prints.

— Jane Borland

## A message from the backyard compost program coordinator

MARK YOUR CALENDAR for the upcoming Annual Christmas luncheon. Saturday, December 6 at 12:00 noon at the Oasis on Joe Pool Lake. This is one of my favorite activities because it gives me a chance to show my appreciation for all the hard work you all do throughout the year. I will mail all the details at a later date, but for now, be sure to mark your calendar because this is one event you don't want to miss.

— Lorrie Anderle



# The Crotchety Composter by John Darling

## Terrific Tierra Verde

On October 18 about 30 people showed up at Tierra Verde Golf Club in far southwest Arlington to make a start on our third compost demonstration site. Somebody later asked me if 30 was a good turnout. I was expecting maybe 3, so I think it was amazing. Do we need three sites?

After all, too many sites might hurt the volunteer effort by stretching folks too thin. Maybe, but I sure hope not. This new site, so remote from the others, might just draw in some brand new people from SW Arlington, Mansfield, and Kennedale who



*At Tierra Verde we had everything: working, talking, pile building, assembling, and even small motorized vehicles to add an air of importance*



*Some of the proud Tierra Verde compost starters at the end of a productive morning. Notable accomplishments: the group built three piles, assembled a 2-section cinder block bin, a 3-bay pallet bin, and somebody showed Lorrie how to hold a pitchfork.*

However, the Lorries of this world are a little sickening to grouches like me, with their effortless ability to get people to do things. I'm pretty sure that she could send out a call for volunteers to help move plutonium and she'd get a bunch, especially if she brought doughnuts. And thanks too, to Stephen Smith for his enthusiasm and organizational expertise.

## It's a First

We're just ending the most stressful time of the year. Last year's leaves are pretty much used up and this year's haven't quite gotten good at dying and dropping. We had a bit of a leaf crisis at Tierra Verde and now another one at Veterans Park. Desperate times call for something or other, so I've just bought my first package of leaf bags. And just bagged my first raked leaves. Don't hardly feel right, but anything for the cause, I guess.

## Don't Try This at Home

Just in case Code Enforcement is listening, let's just say that some hypothetical crotchety composter seems to have wandered into that part of the instruction manual filled with "Don'ts", as in "Don't compost this" and "Don't even *think* about composting that." I gave you every chance to be impressed with my dryer lint collection a while back, but nobody's said anything, so I've been forced to escalate. That lint pile is mostly for kitchen scraps, and even though I layer them with leaves and almost never turn it, the thing stays about the same size. Until the possum, that is. I mean, there it was, a big adult cut down right in front of my house. Contrary to popular opinion, I can take a hint, so I buried it properly in the kitchen/lint pile. The next day it had been unearthed and, uh, interfered with. I did it again and added a bunch of leaves, cottonseed meal, and water. You won't guess what happened the next day. And about then I received orders to compost some arroz con pollo that had become dissatisfied with life in the refrigerator. This called for major excavation, way below the lint



*Creative composting is not necessarily pretty.*

level, and lots more leaves. Then, for some reason, it occurred to me that it was time to part with my oldest Tropic Weight Cool Weave shirt. At least it wasn't dripping with grease, so it felt good to be back more or less on track. But no; just as I'm wondering how to keep a bunch of Church's Fried Chicken bones away from the cats until garbage day, my domestic supervisor remarks, "I thought you were such a hot-shot composter. So why are you throwing bones away, huh?" It seemed a little snide and possibly adolescent but couldn't be ignored. So tomorrow Church's enters the compost cathedral, and I just hope it goes quietly so I can resume chunking in bits of whole-some (green) kitchen debris. By the way, in case you're considering exotic ingredients for your pile, there's one unbreakable rule: Don't turn it anytime soon—think in terms of months if you have any esthetic sensibilities (or a working nose, or both).

## All the News...

Ever since September 27 I've been extra crotchety because the Star-Telegram carried one of the worst compost articles ever written. Here's how the paper makes compost: shred some leaves; pile them up; put dirt, manure, or compost activator on top; let the pile decompose. No greens, no water, but be sure to buy a shredder. The only thing worse here is the illustration—a wheelbarrow holding a potted plant! And best of all, there are no phone numbers or listings for classes. Recycling's too good for this article; I'm going to wrap it around the chicken bones and stick it under the possum.



*Whole lotta cognitive dissonance goin' on: Other people bag leaves, not crotchety composters.*

# A typical work day at Veteran's Park

John Darling, Greg Gordan, Stephen and Cyndi Ives, Joe Brandt and Don Graves are a few of the "regulars" on Saturday mornings at our Veteran's Park demonstration site. This is a hard-working group and we really appreciate all they do. Below, Don Graves poses with citizens attending our two-hour class at Veteran's Park.



Photo by John Presson



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